

Message Text

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43

ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 PC-10 USIE-00 IO-14

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 INRE-00 DODE-00 AGR-20

INT-08 COME-00 FDRE-00 SSO-00 DRC-01 /173 W

----- 096835

O P 101113Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8042

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USINT ALGIERS

USUN NEW YORK 246

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TAGS: EAID, NG

SUBJECT: NIGER DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

REF: A) STATE 121541; B) STATE 121237 (NOTAL); C) NIAMEY 1795
(NOTAL)

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SUMMARY: WE WELCOME PROPOSAL TO ENGAGE AO/OSRO IN ARRANGING

INTERNATIONAL DONOR EFFORT TO GET TRUCKS TO NIGER BEFORE AND DURING RAINY SEASON, BUT ARE CONCERNED THAT INTERNATIONALIZING THIS RELIEF EFFORT MAY DELAY MATTERS AND BRING QUESTION OF AIRLIFT INTO PLAY AGAIN. IF FAO/OSRO RESPONDS AFFIRMATIVELY WE URGE IT CONSULT URGENTLY WITH CANADIANS TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF NEW CANADIAN CONTRIBUTION WHICH WOULD MEET CRITERIA ESTABLISHED BY GON FOR FOREIGN MILITARY OPERATIONS HERE, AND WITH BELGIANS TO INSURE TRUCKS THEY HAVE HERE STAY IN PLACE. WE HAVE REPORTS THAT BELGIUM FOR FINANCIAL REASONS ARE CONSIDERING PULLING OUT. MEANWHILE WE PLAN STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH GON ON OUR NEW INITIATIVE TO MOBILIZE DONORS. END SUMMARY.

1. PROPOSAL TO FAO/OSRO OUTLINED REF A FOR COMMERCIALLY FINANCED-TYPE FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE TRUCK OPERATION HAS NUMBER ADVANTAGES OVER UNILATERAL MILITARY EFFORT AND MAY WELL DO THE TRICK. WE HOPE FAO/OSRO WILL RESPOND ENERGETICALLY AND AFFIRMATIVELY. WE READY TO DO WHATEVER NECESSARY HERE TO PAVE WAY FOR THIS TYPE OF OPERATION AND TO COMMEND IT TO GON.

2. AT SAME TIME WE REMAIN TROUBLED BY TWO POINTS. FIRST, INTERNATIONALIZING EFFORT OF THIS TYPE MAY MEAN DELAYS THAT NIGER CAN ILL AFFORD. AS OUR EFFORTS TO MOVE GRAINS OUT OF COAST PORTS TO SAHEL HAVE DEMONSTRATED USG SEEMS TO HAVE GREATER SENSE OF URGENCY THAN OTHER DONORS WHO APPEAR MORE PREPARED TO LET MATTERS TAKE THEIR NORMAL COURSE. IF OPERATION IS IN FACT INTERNATIONALIZED UNDER FAO OR OTHER AUSPICES IT MAY STILL COME DOWN TO LARGELY US EFFORT BUT SEVERAL WEEKS LATER THAN HIGH PRIORITY UNILATERAL US EXERCISES, AND TIME IS OF ESSENCE. ACCORDINGLY, ON CONTINGENCY BASIS WE HOPE OPERATIONS ANALYSIS (REF B, PARA 3) WILL BE CONTINUED.

3. SECOND, THERE IS QUESTION OF HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND TO GON REQUEST FOR US ASSISTANCE AS SET FORTH IN ITS NOTE (REF C, PARA 2). THIS INCIDENTALLY IS FIRM GOVERNMENT DECISION SETTING FORTH GUIDELINES FOR FOREIGN MILITARY OPERATION EVOLVED SUBSEQUENT TO DUTCH AND CANADIAN SNAFUS AND AS RESULT OF OUR URGING THAT GON CLARIFY ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS SUCH EXERCISES OR RISK DONOR CONFUSION AND IRRITATION. GON PERCEPTION TOWARDS DONOR DIFFERENTIATION NOT APPLICABLE ANY LONGER TO USG (REF B, PARA 1). BELIEVE THAT PROBLEM IS BEHIND US.

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4. I PROPOSE SEE ACTING FORMIN AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY AND TELL HIM (A) GON REQUEST FOR TRUCKS FOR FOOD DISTRIBUTION TO REMOTE AREAS BEFORE AND DURING RAINY SEASON IS RECEIVING URGENT USG CONSIDERATION; (B) BECAUSE OPERATION OF THIS TYPE IS COMPLEX ONE WE EXPLORING VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES INCLUDING TRUCK DELIVERIES FROM EUROPE; (C) WE ALSO CONSULTING WITH OTHER DONORS. DROUGHT ASSISTANCE FOR NIGER HAS BEEN AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT AND WE BELIEVE

WE SHOULD STAY IN STEP WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN THIS MATTER AND
HOPEFULLY ENGAGE THEM IN EFFORT, WITH ALL DONORS POSSIBLY
OPERATING UNDER SOME INTERNATIONAL AUSPICE.

5. BELIEVE FOREGOING STEP IS NECESSARY BECAUSE WE NEED TO STAY IN
CLOSE AND CONTINUOUS TOUCH WITH THIS NEW AND INEXPERIENCED
GOVERNMENT WHICH IS AMBIVALENT ON SUBJECT OF ITS RELATIONS WITH
FOREIGNERS AND FOREIGN AID. IT NEEDS AND WANTS LATTER BUT IS UN-
COMFORTABLE ABOUT HAVING FOREIGNERS, ESPECIALLY MILITARY, CHARGING
AROUND COUNTRY IN LARGE NUMBERS DOING JOBS WHICH IT BELIEVES
(USUALLY INCORRECTLY) ITS OWN PEOPLE CAN DO. AS GON REQUEST TO US
SUGGESTS, THIS GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO TRUST AND HAVE CONFIDENCE IN
US AND OUR INTENTIONS HERE, AND WE NEED TO MAINTAIN AND NURTURE
THIS RELATIONSHIP WHICH CAN SERVE US WELL IN ANY ROUGH DAYS
THAT MAY BE AHEAD AS WE CONTINUE TO COPE WITH DROUGHT RELATED
PROBLEMS.

6. AS FOR GON'S PERFORMANCE TO DATE REGARDING OTHER DONOR
ASSISTANCE, WE DO NOT THINK IT AS CAPRICIOUS AS IT INITIALLY
APPEARS. IT HAS COOPERATED FULLY WITH FOREIGN MILITARY OPERATIONS
ALREADY IN PLACE (BELGIUM), IT HAS WELCOMED AND IS PUTTING TO GOOD
USE BRITISH OFFER OF MILITARY TRUCKS, AND IT WOULD LIKE US TO
JOIN THESE DONORS ON TERMS SET FORTH IN REF C WHICH SEEM REASON-
ABLE AND HAVE MERIT OF REDUCING NUMBERS WE WOULD HAVE TO COMMIT
TO EXERCISE. DECISION REGARDING DUTCH OFFER SHOULD NOT BE FAULTED.
AS DUTCH EXPERIENCE IN MAURITANIA DEMONSTRATES, DUTCH DIDN'T DO
THEIR HOMEWORK THERE ANY BETTER THAN HERE. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND
FROM LOCAL CANADIAN MISSION THAT CANADIAN ACTION NOT FORECLOSED.
MATTER IS STILL REPORTEDLY BEING DEBATED
WITHIN GOC. FINALLY, WE HAVE HEARD FROM LOCAL BELGIUM MILITARY
COMMANDER HAT BELGIAN UNIT, WHOSE CONTRIBUTION IN MOVING FOOD-
STUFFS INLA*

*****MAFVVZCZ

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISASTER RELIEF, TRUCKS, DROUGHTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974NIAMEY01856
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740148-0453
From: NIAMEY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740660/aaaabzct.tel
Line Count: 146
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AID
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) STATE 121541; B) STATE 121237 (NO, TAL); C) NIAMEY 1795
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 APR 2002 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <17 JUN 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NIGER DROUGHT ASSISTANCE
TAGS: EAID, NG
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005